



# CAPITOL COMMISSION™

## Persecution for Freeing a Slave Girl from her Demon

FEBRUARY 8, 2018

Pastor David Andersen / PO Box 2020, Chesterfield, VA 23832 / David.Andersen@capitolcom.org

**Acts 16:16-24** *“And it happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a certain slave-girl having a spirit of divination met us, who was bringing her masters much profit by fortune-telling. 17) Following after Paul and us, she kept crying out, saying, ‘These men are bond-servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation.’ 18) And she continued doing this for many days. But Paul was greatly annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, ‘I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!’ And it came out at that very moment. 19) But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market place before the authorities, 20) and when they had brought them to the chief magistrates, they said, ‘These men are throwing our city into confusion, being Jews, 21) and are proclaiming customs which it is not lawful for us to accept or to observe, being Romans.’ 22) And the crowd rose up together against them, and the chief magistrates tore their robes off them, and proceeded to order them to be beaten with rods. 23) And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to guard them securely; 24) and he, have received such a command, threw them into the inner prison, and fastened their feet in the stocks.” (NASB)*

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“SHE SAW EVIDENT TOKENS OF THEIR BEING SENT FROM GOD, AND THAT THEIR DOCTRINE WOULD PREVAIL; AND BY PROCLAIMING THIS SHE HOPED TO ACQUIRE MORE AUTHORITY, AND A HIGHER REPUTATION FOR BEING HERSELF INSPIRED.”  
ALBERT BARNES

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Now that a church was started, was Paul meeting for prayer more often? Were the words of the demon-possessed girl accurate? What are the two methods found in this passage that Satan uses to destroy the church? What motivated these slave masters? Were the slave masters’ accusations of Paul and Silas true? Why no trial? Do we have depictions of such rods all over our own Capital Square? After such a severe beating, why the maximum security with their incarceration?

### FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- > FEBRUARY 15: ACTS 16:25-34 **PRODUCTIVE PRAYER MEETING PANDEMONIUM**
- > FEBRUARY 22: ACTS 16:35-40 **REQUIRING RESPECT FROM LAWLESS LEADERS**

Silas was a Jewish name and is the Greek form of the Aramaic name for Saul but Silvanus was his Latin name. He had come with Paul and Barnabas from Jerusalem after the Jerusalem Council to affirm the letter to the church at Antioch in Syria and the other churches regarding the question of circumcision for Gentile membership. He had been one of the elders of the Jerusalem church and had ideal mission team credentials as he was a Jew with Roman citizenship and had the rare strength of being a good follower. Silas would have been in perfect agreement with Paul and could prove that Paul was also in full agreement with the mother church in Jerusalem. Silas was also an apostle (1 Thes 2:6). He understood the liberty of the Gospel and was chosen by Paul to be a co-laborer and the entire church at Antioch agreed and approved Paul’s choice. Do you think Silas expected the difficulties he would face on Paul’s team?

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“BUT EVEN AFTER WE HAD SUFFERED BEFORE AND WERE SPITEFULLY TREATED AT PHILIPPI, AS YOU KNOW, WE WERE BOLD IN OUR GOD TO SPEAK TO YOU THE GOSPEL OF GOD IN MUCH CONFLICT.” 1 THESSALONIANS 2:2

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### BIBLE STUDIES

THURSDAY @ 6:30 AM –PRAYER MEETING – GAB 6<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR SPEAKER’S CONFERENCE ROOM

THURSDAY @ 7:00 AM –BIBLE STUDY – GAB 6<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR SPEAKER’S CONFERENCE ROOM

# Virginia

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### I. THE EXORCISM

**ACTS 16:16-18**

Probably the new church plant in Philippi was meeting more often at the place of prayer. As Paul and his team are on their way from Lydia's house to the river outside the city, and they are followed by a fortune telling team featuring a slave girl, literally "*having a spirit of a python.*" This demon caused this doubly enslaved maid to constantly cry out: "*These men are the bond-servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation.*" Such would probably generate a crowd to follow Paul to the place of prayer. This brilliant ploy on the part of the devil and his demons not only to gain authority and reputation in aligning with Paul, but also to infiltrate the church in order to overcome it in its infancy. Paul senses this demonic ploy in time and in concern for this slave girl, he confronts her demon. Luke provides Paul's precise words showing that he only operates in Christ's authority: "*I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!*" The demon instantly obeys.

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**"THE SPIRIT WENT OUT AND THEIR HOPE OF GAIN  
WENT OUT WITH IT."  
J. A. ALEXANDER**

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### II. THE ACCUSATION

**ACTS 16:19-21**

When the demon is overcome in such a dramatic display of the power of Jesus Christ, the ploy of Satan changes. The slave girl had been telling the truth, but now her masters are motivated by greed and the devil to deceive the authorities. With such a public display of power, their clients will know that there will be no more fortune telling and these ruthless slave owners are furious. This must have been a lucrative business because there must have been plenty of them to have "*seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market place before the authorities.*" These "*chief magistrates*" are actually the Generals who govern the city and have their meeting place right next to the Bema Seat on the same corner of the city square.

Luke gives us the precise words of their accusation:

*"These men are throwing our city into confusion, being Jews, and are proclaiming customs which it is not lawful for us to accept or to observe, being Romans."* There is only one truth imbedded between the two false accusations, Paul and Silas were Jews. They expected that the anti-Semitic sentiment and the Roman pride to be sufficient to make their false accusations immediately accepted among the citizens of their great city as well as their leaders.

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**"THE IRONY IS THAT THE ONLY VIOLATION OF ROMAN LAW  
IN THIS INCIDENT WAS THE BEATING AND IMPRISONMENT  
OF PAUL AND SILAS, 'MEN WHO ARE ROMANS,' WITHOUT A  
TRIAL. NOT THE APOSTLES BUT THEIR PERSECUTORS  
WERE THE REAL OPPONENTS OF CIVIL ORDER."**

**DENNIS E. JOHNSON**

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### III. THE PERSECUTION

**ACTS 16:22-24**

Here is a classic case of the leaders following the crowd instead of doing their job and seeking justice and truth. These generals please the crowd by completely denying an appropriate trial and personally stripping these apostles of their garments and they "*proceeded to order them to be beaten with rods.*" Such rods were initially bound together with leather thongs, and were the symbol of Roman authority, which is found in our own statue of George Washington in our Capitol Rotunda and in various places along the fence around our Capitol. This seems to be the first of three times that Paul was beaten with such rods (2 Cor 11:25). Unfortunately there was no limit to the number of blows given by the rods in Roman law while the Law of Moses mercifully allowed a beating to go no further than forty stripes (Deut 25:3), which Paul endured five times (2 Cor 11:24). The "*many blows*" implies that they lost count, and with bloody backs they are thrown in the inner prison with their feet in stocks.

#### Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Do you demonstrate mercy upon those who are under the oppression of others or particularly sin and Satan?
- 2) Is your life characterized by prayer as this team so often demonstrated by their example?
- 3) As one in authority, do you expect that there are those who seek to deceive you and do you ask the Lord for wisdom?